



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans
Quarterly Meeting
August 14, 2020
5:00 – 7:00 PM

Teleconference
Due to Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID 19)
Teleconference instructions:
Conference call in number: 1-866-685-1580
Conference code: 5152813855

Minutes

Call to Order at 5:02 p.m. by chairperson Baba-Singhri

Present:

Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Rosalind Fox-Peebles, Lynn Sutton, Monica Mead

Absent:

Kenneth Morris, Matthew Gibson, San Wong, ex-officio

Staff:

Kim Cheeks, Monica Stone

Welcome/Introductions:

Visitors:

Janice Taylor – Iowa City
Warren Dukes – AmeriGroup
Lisa Covington – Iowa City
Kaleena Johnson
Arnold Woods – Des Moines NAACP

Approve Minutes of June 26, 2020:

Motion to approve the minutes from Fox, 2nd by Sutton, approved unanimously.

Financial report:

Stone shared she had no new information regarding the budget. The department is still working with a status quo budget, where most of budget goes to pay staff; CAS seven (7) staff members for underserved populations, operational needs for commissioners, and some capital to fund projects for each office.

Reports:

No reports

Old Business

1. ICSAA Commissioners' Only Meeting and Strategic Planning – commissioners decided they need a meeting to do some strategic planning, and found out we needed to follow rules for a closed meeting. Members decided to open it up for discussion at this meeting.

Sutton offered the need to have a meeting to look at what is going on in our communities to figure out the direction to take to address the issues and what will happen in the future.

Fox, would like to make sure we define our purpose, goals, and accountability measures and to put some structure in place. To align those goals, partner with other organizations, and get a better understanding on the structure of commission so to be more efficient.

Stone, read the rules according to Iowa Code Chap 21, sec 21.5, to hold a closed session, and reasons that apply. She is supportive of a strategic planning session and board operations. Staff will be happy to work with the commission to set up.

Fox clarified that the intention wasn't to hide anything, just wanted to better present the commission to the public.

Mead said the need to review the accomplishments of the commission, look at other commissions, and determine our path. She feels the commission need to leave a footprint.

Cheeks asked if the commission could hold a retreat or create subcommittees to address certain issues and hold those separate meetings? Stone, replied, Yes, would need to be fewer than a quorum.

Sutton stated the board she sits on in Dubuque held a strategic session with no public comment, Stone replied absolutely, the commission could hold a session with no public comment.

Cheeks asked the board if they wanted to select a meeting date for a strategic session with no public comment before the next quarterly meeting.

2. Collaboration with other Black Organizations

Baba - Brought this up at the last meeting, that he spoke with NAACP, Pastor Whitfield of Corinthian Baptist Church, and Kevin Sanders of NAACP. He suggests the need to invite them to the next commission meeting to share what they are doing and how we can collaborate. He invited Input from others – Sutton felt is a good idea.

3. Letter to Governor Reynolds – COVID 19 update
Baba, commission hasn't heard from the governor if she has received the letter. He feels she should acknowledge receipt of the letter, we need an official response from her office. Baba brought the issue to the DHR board meeting. Stone said will follow up with the Governor's office. Meghan O'Brien attended in a listening role at the last meeting, and she will follow up with her.
4. Finalize speaker series discussion – Sioux City
Baba asked the commissioners to identify people to attend and select a date for lunch and listen session. Decided that Cheeks will send out potential dates for planning session, quarterly meeting/ lunch and listen.
5. DHR Board Meeting update -
Baba referred to Stone to comment. Not much to update. Director did not have much to present. ICSW - Women's Hall of Fame in August will be virtual. ILA - Latino Hall of Fame in September will be a small celebration for inductees and commission via live stream. Subject to change if conditions change.

New Business

No new business.

Public Comment:

Janice Taylor-Iowa City:

- Wanted to commend the Governor for signing the executive order to restore felon voting rights, but feels there needs to be collaboration with political parties to make them aware felons can vote. Sutton said Legal Aid has been holding sessions to sign felons up to vote.
- Questioned if there is data on number of inmates that entered in prison with harsh sentences for minor offenses. Cheeks will work with her on data collected in IDOC.
- If you have housing or rental disputes, who handles them? Sutton explained the class action lawsuit against landlords in Dubuque as a result of housing discrimination. She will get in contact with her to discuss further.
- Police brutality and where the data is stored.
- Neighborhoods without grocery stores/food deserts? Sutton Dubuque has addressed with city council.
- Job discrimination, where do you file complaints? Baba talked about the institutional racism going on by employers around the state and stressed the need for the issue addressed by the commission.

Lisa Covington – Iowa City:

- She has been working with educators across the state, since January, on Black Lives Matter for schools to plan a week of events in February to highlight the topic. They have been doing activities associated with youth. Ask the commission to share with any black educators or students. They are supporting black student unions, teachers, and students broadly. She will share the information with Mrs. Cheeks.

Arnolds Woods - NAACP Des Moines:

- NAACP has been holding voter registration for about 7 years, and they've been seeking clarification from the governor's office on what rights felons will have associated with getting rights restored.

Next Meeting:

Cheeks will send out potential meeting dates.

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn meeting by Sutton, 2nd by Fox, approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cheeks

Recorder